

Arriet de Voltaire (F.M.) K 643.0/17
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A L M I D A,

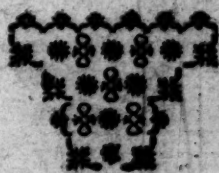
A

T R A G E D Y,

As it is performed at

The Theatre Royal in DRURY-LANE.

By a L A D Y. (*Mrs Celisia*)



L O N D O N:

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M D C C L X X I.

A L M I D A

P R O L O G U E

By WILLIAM WILKINS

Spoken by MR. REDDISH

CRITICS be dumb—no night a lady fair,
From soft Italia's shores, an English maid,
That fate there binds her in a pleasing chain,
Sends to our stage the first-born in DUNN-
True to her birth she pants for British bays,
And to her country trusts for genuine praise.
From infancy well reared in tragic lore,
She treads the path her father trod before.
To the same candid judges trusts her cause,
And hopes the same applause and applause.
No such task bears the female's claim,
Who pleads hereditary right to fame.
Of love and arms she sings, the mighty too,
Whole powers uniting must the world be true.
Of love and arms! in that heroic age,
Which knew no poet's no historian's page,
But war to glory form'd its wondrous mind,
And chivalry alone taught words to mankind.
Nor taught in vain, the youth who dar'd aspire
To the nice honours of a lover's fire.
Obscure with distant, can each right tell,
Each stern command of labour's patient school;
Was early train'd to bear the falling beam,
Of burning suns, and winter's fierce extreme;
Was brave, and taught to stand as men in the field,
His sword he breath'd, his soldier's eagle there.

P R O L O G U E,

By WILLIAM WHITEHEAD, Esq;

Spoken by Mr. REDDISH.

CRITICS be dumb—to-night a lady sues,
From soft Italia's shores, an English muse;
Tho' fate there binds her in a pleasing chain,
Sends to our stage the off spring of her brain:
True to her birth she pants for British bays,
And to her country trusts for genuine praise.
From infancy well read in tragic lore,
She treads the path her father trod before;
To the same candid judges trusts her cause,
And hopes the same indulgence and applause.
No Salick Law here bars the female's claim,
Who pleads hereditary right to fame.

Of love and arms she sings, the mighty two,
Whose powers uniting must the world subdue;
Of love and arms! in that heroic age,
Which knew no poet's, no historian's page;
But war to glory form'd the unletter'd mind,
And chivalry alone taught morals to mankind;
Nor taught in vain, the youth who dar'd aspire
To the nice honours of a lover's fire,
Observ'd with duteous care each rigid rule,
Each stern command of labour's patient school;
Was early train'd to bear the fultry beams
Of burning suns, and winter's fierce extremes;
Was brave, was temperate: to one idol fair
His vows he breath'd, his wishes center'd there:

PROLOGUE.

*Honour alone could gain her kind regard,
Honour was virtue, beauty it's reward.
And shall not British breasts, in beauty's cause,
Adopt to-night the manners which she draws?
Male writers we confess are lawful prize,
Giants and monsters that but rarely rise!
With their enormous spoils your triumphs grace,
Attack, confound, exterminate the race;
But when a lady tempts the critic war,
Be all knights errant, and protect the fair.*

Dramatis Personæ.

TANCRED, ALDAMON, ARNOLPH, ORBASSAN, LOREDAN, CATANIO,	}	Knights.	<i>Mr. Barry.</i> <i>Mr. Incbbald.</i> <i>Mr. Reddish.</i> <i>Mr. Aickin.</i> <i>Mr. J. Aickin.</i> <i>Mr. Palmer.</i>
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ALMIDA, SOPHIA,	<i>Mrs. Barry.</i> <i>Mrs. W. Barry.</i>
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Soldiers, Guards, Attendants. Several Knights,
People, &c.

The SCENE, Syracuse.

ADVERTISEMENT.

THE *Tancrede* of Mr. de Voltaire is the model from whence the Tragedy of *Almida* was taken. Its author has translated her original like a poet, not like an interpreter. Judging that the dialogue in the French, however elegant, would appear too long to an English audience, she has taken the liberty of shortening some of the speeches. Her friends flatter themselves that the spirit of Voltaire has been preserv'd, and that this great author will not disdain his English dress. The judicious and friendly hand of Mr. Garrick made a few additions and alterations, and gave directions for leaving out some of the least necessary lines in the representation; which are here marked by inverted double commas in the margin. Sensible of the justice of Mr. de Voltaire's remark, and his preface on the advantage of decorations, our Poet spared neither pains, or expence to please the public in this secondary respect: his care throughout merits and obtains their approbation, the thanks of the author, and of her friends. The tears in every eye of every audience demonstrate their sense of Mrs. Barry's inimitable representation of the poet's tender and noble sentiments.

A L M I D A,

T R A G E D Y.

A C T I.

S C E N E I.

ARNOLPH, ORBASSAN, LOREDAN, CATANIO.

Ranged as in council.

ARNOLPH.

ILLUSTRIOUS knights, Sicilia's brave avengers,
Who, from regard to my declining years,
Have deign'd beneath my roof to hold your council,
Let vigor prompt your measures! long, too long
Coop'd in our walls, have we oppos'd our tyrants,
With useless courage: Syracuse is lost,
Unless you rise intrepid to defend her!
'Tis time to meet the haughty Mussulman,
And from the fatal wreck that threatens our fortunes
To save the best, the only good that's left us,
More sacred even than life to noble minds,
Our sinking liberty!

B

LOREDAN,

A L M I D A,

LOREDAN.

Two powerful foes,
 Byzantian Cæsars, and the Saracen,
 Who slight the faith of nations, and their rights,
 Would bend us to their yoke with proud oppression.
 " Messina owns the Greek, and Solyman
 " In Agrigentum holds imperious sway,
 " O'er the vast plains by lofty Etna crown'd.
 Our common tyrants, of each other jealous,
 Tho' for our ruin arm'd have prov'd our safety.
 Contending for their prize, their strength is wasted,
 Their armies thinn'd; their measures disconcerted.
 Heaven, to our liberty propitious, opens
 A precious moment——

ARNOLPH.

Let us not neglect it.
 Too well I know, by inward factions tor'n,
 That Syracuse holds precarious freedom;
 But let oblivion shade those horrid days,
 When on ourselves we furious turn'd our swords,
 And stain'd our country with her children's blood.
 Let now one wish unite us: Orbassan!
 Zeal for the state; 'tis that alone should guide us.
 Let our alliance be its firmest base;
 If we with envious and with jealous eye
 Have view'd our equals, let us now be firm,
 And perish rather than admit a master!

ORBASSAN.

Arnolph 'tis true, too long between our houses,
 Proud enmity has reign'd, and shook the state.
 Our union now is Syracuse's wish,
 'Tis her true interest, and not less our own:
 With patriot warmth, your daughter I accept;
 Henceforth devoted to the state, to you,
 Ev'n from that altar, where I plight my vows,

A TRAGEDY.

3

I'll march to Solyman. But not to crush

The Moor alone demands our present care.

Here may be other foes, not less pernicious:

“ A tyrant's hated race: perhaps in secret,

“ By a misjudging people lov'd and cherish'd.

What title had the wand'ring sons of France,

In our fair climates to usurp dominion?

“ What led bold Coucy from the idle Seine

“ To seek the pleasing banks of Arethusa?

“ With seeming modesty, with studied softness,

“ He proffer'd service; but too soon the traitor

“ With pride and arrogance assum'd the master;

“ His faithless race accumulating wealth,

“ And gaining by insidious arts the people,

“ Strove to out-rival me; but from the top

“ Of Fortune's giddy wheel, he fell to ruin.

The only offspring of this dangerous race,

Young Tancred, exil'd in his early years,

Has serv'd, as Fame reports, Byzantian Cæsars:

Bold, injur'd, brave, he doubtless thirsts for vengeance,

And must abhor our laws. The sons of Gaul

Are all just objects of suspicion here,

“ In our own times have we not seen three knights

“ From Neustria's frozen coast, obscure, unknown,

“ Led by their courage only; with no claim,

“ But that which Fortune ever lends the strongest,

“ The law of force: from their pacific homes,

“ Did they not drive the native, just possessors,

“ And found a kingdom on Apulian plains?

Are we not prey'd upon by ravenous nations?

Forth from all corners of the barbarous world,

Pirates, and robbers lawless pour upon us,

Invited by our fields, which smile luxurious,

And by their fatal plenty tempt them hither.

CATANIO.

'Tis time to think of safety, and of vengeance,

Too oft has treachery menac'd us with ruin:

B 2

Let

Let then that law with vigor be maintain'd,
 Which dooms to shameful and immediate death
 Whoever dares to hold a secret commerce,
 Fatal to Syracuse, with the foe.
 As lenity ill tim'd makes traitors bolder,
 Let neither sex nor age engage our pity.
 From whence does Venice boast her power unshaken?
 Caution and rigor are its solid basis.

LOREDAN.

'Tis sure a shame to these degenerate days,
 That in Sicilia Solyman should hold
 A secret intercourse with venal subjects,
 Won from their country by his odious favours;
 Who basely watch the moment to betray us.
 " By private fraud, or open hostile force:
 " Studious to nourish our intestine broils,
 " The surest means that lead a state to ruin.
 " Our women too, a vain incautious sex!
 " Of novelties and heroes ever fond;
 " With partial eyes beheld this pompous Moor!
 " I blush to think how many even of us,
 " Caught by those gaudy arts Arabia boasts of,
 " Barter for tinsel, and for modern toys,
 " The manly virtues of their rougher fathers!
 " Let valour be our science! Let our arts
 " Be how to vanquish: I disclaim all others.
 " But chiefly I approve that wise severity,
 " Our laws and liberty's support and venger.
 One bosom traitor may undo a state;
 Such there have been and such again may rise.

CATANIO.

Let's set a warning up, so terrible!
 That holdest perfidy may tremble at it.
 Our country calls, and pity were a crime.
 Let the Moor fall, and Tancred be proscrib'd;
 His dang'rous race is fatal to our freedom.

A wife

A TRAGEDY.

A wise and just decree of our last council
 Transfer'd to Orbassan his rich inheritance.
 His faith and valour well deserv'd the gift,
 And thus our lurking enemies shall learn
 The fate of rebels, and respect our justice.
 " Your sentiments are mine, my lord: let Tancres
 " Seek at Byzantium riches, power, protection;
 " Let him be honour'd by that odious court,
 " He has no right to grace or favor here;
 " He has himself renounc'd our sacred ramparts,
 " By basely stooping to a foreign master.
 " Thrown off for ever, the vile slave of Cæsar
 " Has naught to hope for in a brave republic.
 " Our laws most firm support is Orbassan,
 " Nor for his merit could the state do less.

ARNOLPH.

With joy I view in him a future son:
 Dearer than life, I love my daughter too.
 Yet most unwillingly I see them share
 An orphan's spoils; and 'twas with deep regret—

LOREDAN.

You blame the Senate?

ARNOLPH.

No, but love not rigour.
 Yet to the sentence awful of the law,
 I bow submissive; for the good of all
 Should ever be prefer'd to private feelings.

ORBASSAN.

The state, supreme disposer of our fortunes,
 Bestows them as it wills—nor did I court
 This trifling favour—

ARNOLPH.

A L M I D A,

ARNOLPH.

'Tis enough, my lord.

Let us now hasten these auspicious nuptials;
 And let to-morrow's sun bring on the day,
 When this fierce chief of a destroying race
 Shall meet a conqueror. In all your rival,
 He ask'd and offer'd peace on the high terms
 Of my Almida's hand. Presumptuous thought!
 Rejected with the scorn he well deserv'd,
 He now breathes double vengeance. Be it yours
 To level with the dust his towering hopes.
 Weakness and age steal on me; and the task
 Arduous to govern, asks a firmer hand.
 None more than Orbassan deserv'd your choice,
 Wise, brave and noble. 'Twill be yet some joy
 In my old days to see your valiant deeds,
 And ere I die, my country free and happy.

ORBASSAN.

After a youth of virtue, age is sacred;
 It fills us with a kind of holy love,
 And tender veneration! You, my lord,
 Shall be our guide. This day must be victorious,
 And by your side we'll meet or death, or conquest.
 [Exeunt Knights, &c.]

S C E N E II.

ARNOLPH, ORBASSAN.

ARNOLPH.

Am I at length, brave Orbassan, your father?
 Is there no shadow lurking in your heart
 Of our resentments past? may I now hope
 The tender feelings of a son—

ORBASSAN,

A TRAGEDY.

27

ORBASSAN.

My lord,

I have already open'd all my breast:
My soul's first passion is my country's love,
'Tis that which reconciles us. Reaton's voice
Suggests this marriage, which unites our houses;
Yet be assur'd, I ne'er had wish'd to form it,
Had not my heart amidst our enmities,
Now hush'd in peace, felt and esteem'd your worth.
I am no stranger to the power of love;
But this alliance, this important marriage,
Far nobler thoughts inspir'd than the vain wish,
The fond caprice, by fancy lighted up
To blaze a moment, then dissolve in air,
By cold indifference or aversion follow'd!

Call'd by my country to the field of Mars,
While danger, war, and glory breathe around,
I cannot sigh and gild the lover's tale!
Motives more solemn urge this wish'd alliance,
The splendor of the state: our happy union,
The public interest to our care entrusted;
When thoughts like these exalt and fill the soul,
Love is but weakness: yet I hope its joys
Will crown our union in more tranquil hours;
But now must yield to higher, nobler duties.

ARNOLPH.

I like this generous spirit in a soldier;
Frankness may please—but not austerity.
I hope Almida, with becoming sweetness,
Will harmonize your soul. Small is the praise
To courage only due; but manly softness
Becomes a hero, and adorns his virtues.
Besides my daughter in her childhood absent,
From our rough scenes, and loud domestic storms,
May shrink perhaps at this apparent harshness,

Which

A L M I D A,

Which looks like pride, and borders upon rudeness.
 Forgive an old man's counsels, and a father's.

ORBASSAN.

Excuse yourself the sternness of my humour;
 Bred up in camps, I ever yet prefer'd,
 To that false glitter which is call'd politeness,
 The cringing arts of flatt'ry and of courts,
 The plain but noble manners of republics.
 Yet I respect and prize in fair Almida
 Her worth, your blood, a name and rank superior.
 I hope to merit by my cares her heart,
 To see and love in her a father's virtues.

ARNOLPH.

By my order she here advances.

S C E N E III.

ARNOLPH, ORBASSAN, ALMIDA,

ARNOLPH.

The welfare of the state, the voice of Syracuse,
 Heav'n and your father destine you a husband.
 Motives like these admit not of refusal.

This noble knight, now join'd with me in friendship,
 Has from my mouth receiv'd your promis'd faith,
 His name and rank can be no stranger to you;
 Pow'rful in Syracuse, he heads our armies,
 And Tancred's rights to him transferr'd—

ALMIDA.

Just heaven!

[*aside.*]

ARNOLPH.

In this alliance of itself so brilliant,
 Is the least object that attracts.

A TRAGEDY.

ORBASSAN.

My lord,
I by your daughter's hand enough am honour'd;
Her sight endears the present to my heart.
May her choice deserving, and your goodness
Prove not unworthy of a gift so precious.

ALMIDA.

I know my father's kind paternal love
Has ever wish'd to make his daughter happy;
And now my hand he destines to a hero—
Thus when those long debates, that vex'd the state,
Are by your soothing wisdom quite subsided;
I am the pledge reserv'd to fix your union,
The intention honors me—it may be useful—
Yet sure—my lord, I hope you will excuse me
[to Orbassan.]

If my astonish'd heart, from earliest youth
Accustom'd to the frowns of adverse fortune,
And by the sudden news confus'd, one moment
Wishes for refuge in a father's bosom.

ORBASSAN.

Far be it from me, madam, to oppose
A wish so just, so worthy my esteem.
Nor would I seem intrusive to presume
Upon those rights your goodness has avow'd.
I have obtain'd your hand, and must deserve it.
Our warriors wait me, and I fly to head them.
[Exit Orbassan.]

SCENE IV.

ALMIDA, ARNOLPH.

ARNOLPH.

Thou seem'st confus'd, abash'd; why is that eye,
With tears suffus'd, averted from thy father?

C

Thy

Thy bosom laboring with a smother'd sigh
 Seems to reproach me; a repining heart
 Seconds but ill th' obedience of the lips.

ALMIDA.

Alas! my father, little did I think
 Your past misfortunes and dissensions over,
 You would espouse the cause of Orbassan,
 Or that this hand was destin'd to unite ye!
 Must then these arms be open to your foe?
 Can I forget how from your household gods,
 The rage of civil war unpitying drove you?
 How forc'd, unwilling, my lost mother flew,
 And sought for safety on a foreign shore.
 Torn by my fate from your protecting arms,
 Sad witness and companion of her woes,
 Long did I share them at the court of Cæsar.
 Even from my cradle, train'd in sorrow's school,
 Early I learn'd beneath a hapless parent,
 Wand'ring and fugitive to bear with exile,
 And the sad fate of out-casts: to support
 The frown disdainful of a haughty court;
 The cruel mockery of false compassion,
 Bitterer than insult; yet amidst my woes,
 The bright example of a mother's virtues,
 Deep in my bosom fix'd a sense of honor;
 Depriv'd too soon of her maternal care,
 Like the weak reed, shook by regardless winds,
 Friendless I stood alone and unprotected!
 Your fortunes chang'd, and trembling for her safety,
 Ungrateful Syracuse recall'd you to her.
 Your ravish'd wealth and honors she restor'd,
 Trusted her armies to your brave command,
 And from her frightened walls repuls'd the foe.
 Shelter'd once more in your paternal bosom,
 From whence no common miseries had torn me,
 I only come perhaps to prove fresh sorrows.

“ Too

A TRAGEDY.

11

" Too well I see the aim, the hope that leads you,
 " To light the torch of this ill suited hymen :
 " Long have I been the victim of your foes,
 " And now at last am yours ;
 For trust me, Sir,
 This day ill-omen'd leads to new misfortunes.

ARNOLPH.

Banish thy fears, this day shall make thee blest'd.
 Trust to a father's word. Thou know'st how dear
 Thy peace, thy honor must be to my heart.
 The lustre of this marriage will efface
 Th' affront from haughty Solyman receiv'd,
 Who dar'd to ask thy hand. You wed a hero,
 My rival once, now my support and friend.

ALMIDA.

He your support ! Ah what an empty claim
 Pride without justice makes to our esteem !
 'Tis sure a pity that this valiant hero
 Despoils the innocent to swell his greatness !

ARNOLPH.

Severely prudent it is true the council
 In Tancred punishes a foreign race ;
 Which overbearing long abus'd its power ;
 But now detested

ALMIDA.

I am misinform'd,
 Or Tancred still is lov'd in Syracuse.

ARNOLPH.

That he is brave even hatred must allow.
 Illyria lately by his arm subdued
 Proclaims his valor : but the fame he gathers,
 Beneath the eagles of those hated Cæsars,

Serves but to make him more detested here,
And by an edict banish'd from our ramparts—

ALMIDA.

How! Tancred banish'd?

ARNOLPH.

Yes, they fear his presence.
If thou hast seen him when in Cæsar's court,
Thou know'st the hate, the enmity he bears us.

ALMIDA.

Alas! I thought not so, nor did my mother;
Nay more, she spoke with wonder of his virtues;
Virtues which might have sav'd this sinking state—
Had not a faction triumph'd—

ARNOLPH.

'Tis enough,
The counsel of a father ought to guide thee;
To time, to place, with prudent virtue yield:
Tancred, and Solyman, and Cæsar's court,
Alike are objects of aversion here.
I for my country sixty years have fought;
Unjust I serv'd it, and ungrateful love it:
Adopt my sentiments; my stormy days
Are hast'ning to their end; my only hope,
By sorrow unextinguish'd, is thy bliss!
Could I behold thee happy, one fair gleam
Would brighten my last hour!

ALMIDA.

Your goodness, Sir,
Wakes all my soul to filial love and duty.
My life, my wishes, are to you devoted,
But if indeed you wish to see me happy,

Urge

A TRAGEDY.

13

Urge not this marriage. A prophetic terror
Runs freezing thro' my breast, and warns me from it.
Whence springs for Orbassan your sudden fondness?
His boasted credit may not last for ever;
Fortune may change; may soon withdraw her smiles;
Perhaps this hero is too sure, too hasty,
To vaunt himself your son, and my proud master.

ARNOLPH.

How! Thou dost not sure presume —

ALMIDA.

This boldness

May seem an outrage, and perhaps offend you.
Too well I know, that in a stern republic
Our sex is cramped by harsh ungentle rules;
Not as at Byzantium honor'd; for your rough laws
Exact obedience, and forbid a murmur.
These stubborn Mussulmen, too long your masters,
Have taught to Sicily their barb'rous manners;
But who shall rob me of a father's kindness?

ARNOLPH.

None but thyself. Something mysterious lurks
Beneath thy words; I would not pierce their meaning.
A short delay my fondness grants, but mark me,
Presume not I will suffer thy refusal;
My word is past; no power on earth shall loose it.
Avert kind gods these inauspicious omens!
Smile on this union! Be it thine, Almida,
To claim from heaven protection by thy virtue,
And may thy days be happier than thy father's.

[Ex. Arnolph.]

SCENE

A L M I D A.

S C E N E V.

ALMIDA *alone.*

ALMIDA.

Tancred!—

My soul's best love! shall I then be vile,
 To break my vows—for thy dire foe to break them?
 “Than him more cruel, faithless even to meanness,
 Thy ravish'd fortunes share with thy oppressor,
 Shall I——

S C E N E VI.

ALMIDA, SOPHIA.

ALMIDA.

Sophia, I'm undone! my father
 Destines my hand, but this repugnant heart
 Ruin or death prefers to Orbassan.

SOPHIA.

Too well I guess how this must pain your heart.
 I know it's feelings, tender, firm and noble.
 Nothing that fortune or a court could offer,
 Had power to tempt it. Solyman and Tancred
 With equal ardor lov'd you——
 But Tancred's virtues, his superior merit,
 All that can grace a hero, gain'd your heart,
 And hearts like yours once touch'd, are fix'd for ever.

ALMIDA.

Tancred they banish, strip, and load with wrongs.
 Envy and hatred is the hero's lot;
 But this still binds him closer to my soul!
 Know too he is still regretted in these walls,
 The people love him——

SOPHIA.

A TRAGEDY.

SOPHIA.

Banish'd in his youth,
The worldly friends of his forgotten father,
Shrunk from the son, and left him to his fate.
Few hearts like yours resist the pow'r of absence;
The great no idol but their interest know;
Oft are the people kinder——

ALMIDA.

And more just.

SOPHIA.

Alas! they are depress'd; our friends are hidden,
Or dare not speak in favor of an exile.
A tyrant senate rules, all pow'rful here.

ALMIDA.

All pow'rful yes, when Tancred is away.

SOPHIA.

Ah! could he shew himself, we yet might hope,
But far from hence——

ALMIDA.

Affist me heav'n! Sophia,
In thy kind bosom let me place my trust;
Know then, that Tancred is not distant far,
And whilst his proud oppressors plan his ruin,
'Tis time he should appear, and bid them tremble.
Tancred is in Messina.

SOPHIA.

Can it be?
And dares another to your hand aspire?

ALMIDA.

Perish the hated thought! nay soon perhaps,
My foes and I shall own one common lord.
I'll tell thee all—but we must greatly dare.
This yoke is shameful, I will shake it off.

“How

" How vile in me if meanly I betray'd him!
 Obedience here would be a cloak for falshood.
 Ah! let him come to sooth this trembling heart!
 Let him be mine! Well does my faith deserve him.
 Bound to a tyrant, shall I timid slave
 Poorly submit, a mean unhappy victim,
 And veil my treach'ry with the name of duty!
 No, love and honor kindle all my soul,
 Exalt it far beyond my sex's weakness;
 If in this enterprize, there should be dangers,
 Joyful I'll meet them, they are all for Tancred.

[*Exeunt.*]

END of the FIRST ACT.



A TRAGEDY.

17

A C T II.

SCENE I.

ALMIDA *alone.*

ALMIDA.

WHITHER uncertain did I bend my steps?
Whence is this shivering? can it be remorse?
Remorse for what? 'tis only guilt should know it.
Sophia speak, am I in all obey'd? [*to Sophia, who enters.*

SOPHIA.

The slave is gone, and with him bears your letter.

ALMIDA.

The secret of my life is in his hands;
I know his zeal, and ever found him trusty:
“ Thus chance will have it so, we sometimes owe
“ Our all to those, whom fate has placed the lowest.
This faithful slave, tho' born in Syracuse,
Springs from a race of Saracens; and knows
The laws and languages of either nation,
And every various path of Etna's mountains.
Grant him kind Gods with steps unmark'd to pass
Yon hostile camp: To him I owe the notice
Of Tancred's private voyage to Sicilia.
As yet, by some cross accident prevented,
Oft has he tried in vain to reach his presence,
What varied sorrows! Fate at last is weary;
Thus to pursue, to keep us thus asunder.
My note, in secret trusted to the Moor,
Shall reach Messina ere to-morrow dawn.

SOPHIA.

The step is perilous. But Tancred's name
Is not once mention'd in your cautious letter;

D

And

And tho' it rose so often to your soul,
 You wisely ne'er indulg'd it to your pen;
 Thus should your letter by the Saracens
 Be stopt or read, 'twou'd be of no importance;
 Never was love with prudence more united,
 Or bolder without rashness; yet my breast,
 I know not why, is full of apprehension.

ALMIDA.

Heaven sends me Tancred, wouldst thou have me fear?

SOPHIA.

Yet I could wish that its protecting goodness
 Had in some happier spot decreed your meeting.
 Brave as he is, can Tancred singly stem
 Oppression's tide? Ah! what will here support him
 Against the rage of foes combin'd?

ALMIDA.

His glory!

SOPHIA.

His rival's pow'r is great.

ALMIDA.

Dismiss thy fears,

Left they infect me too. Hast thou forgot
 My mother dying, join'd our willing hands?
 Tancred is mine, nor is there ought on earth,
 Has pow'r or right my sentiments to change.
 How oft did we regret this fatal island!
 In Cæsar's court, beneath the smile of love,
 To these sad shores, which now my soul abhors,
 With vain desire we turn'd our longing eyes!
 Ah! little did I think my cruel fate
 Had doom'd me wife to Tancred's deadliest foe,
 'Tis right at least, that he should know this outrage,
 And learn from me, his loss, and my curst fate.
 O that my power was equal to my wish!
 I love my father, and respect his age;

Else

Else should my voice awake and arm the people,
 Against this Orbassan, who thus enslaves us;
 "Envious and base, dares he pretend my hand?"
 "And must I tamely bear it, meanly yield?"
 Where, Syracuse, is thy vaunted freedom,
 Thy pompous boast of hating tyranny?
 Can there be tyrants, more accurs'd, more odious,
 Than those who lord it o'er the free-born mind,
 And bid us hate, and love, at their command!

SOPHIA.

This very day I hear a dreadful edict
 Is by the senate issued against Tancred;
 And death attends whoever dares infringe it.

ALMIDA.

At first, Sophia, I with trembling heard it,
 But generous love inspires the manly purpose,
 The firm design. My soul adores in Tancred,
 A hero's worth, and emulates his virtues.

SOPHIA.

This law severe seems meant to awe the people.
 Its horrid purpose points not sure at you.

ALMIDA.

It points at Tancred. Barbarous and unjust,
 This jealous law is worthy of our masters.
 It was not thus that his brave ancestors
 Reign'd in the hearts of those their valour conquer'd.
 They won by force, then triumph'd by their mercy.
 How different now! a stern suspicious senate,
 Where black distrust, and timid councils reign!
 Weak, proud, and stormy, by the people hated,
 Would fright us to submission. Ah! Sophia,
 Perhaps I err; for love with all its train,
 Of mingled fears and wishes, rules my bosom;
 My soul is full of Tancred; far from him
 Joyless I live, and tread an empty world.

D 2

SCENE

S C E N E II.

In the fore Scene, ALMIDA, SOPHIA. In the back Scene,

ARNOLPH and KNIGHTS.

ARNOLPH.

Woe to a wretched father! 'tis too true!
Just gods! I hop'd to die without dishonour.
Thou wretch be gone—— *[to his daughter.]*

ALMIDA.

My father!

ARNOLPH.

Father!
Dar'st thou pronounce that name, thou traitress,
False to thy blood, thy country, and thy honour!

ALMIDA.

Oh my Sophia! I am lost. *[leaning on Sophia.]*

ARNOLPH.

Yet stop;

Weep'st thou thy crime?

ALMIDA.

I weep our mutual woes.

ARNOLPH.

Canst thou deny thy hand, perfidious?

ALMIDA.

No.

ARNOLPH.

Then see thy guilt, in thy own writing trac'd
She answers not——

ORBASSAN.

Confusion ties her tongue.

ALMIDA.

Oppression thus misjudges off her victims,
And ere she strikes, defames the destin'd wretch:
I blush not to avow——

ARNOLPH.

A T R A G E D Y.

21 05

ARNOLPH.

Ah 'tis too much!

Firmness in guilt excludes thee even from pity,
Hence and attend thy doom. Some other hand
Must close these wretched eyes.

[Almida goes out, supported by Sophia.]

S C E N E III.

ARNOLPH, KNIGHTS.

ARNOLPH.

Most noble lords,

Almida's crime is to my shame too certain,
Yet in this bosom to the state devoted,
Kind nature has its rights. Think not a father
With broken heart can mingle in your councils.
Nor can you sure expect, this trembling hand
Her death should sign; 'tis a dire act my heart
Shrinks from with horror!

L O R E D A N.

We revere your sorrows,

Nor would we irritate your deep affliction;
But you have seen yourself that guilty letter.
The slave that carried it to Solyman,
Stopt and surpriz'd just as he reach'd the camp,
But with his life gave up the fatal secret.
The state was lost. Our solemn oaths, our peril,
Permit no weak regards, no false compassion,
Nor does the law inexorable listen
To the soft pleadings of paternal pity.
Our country summons us with awful voice,
Nor can we disobey.

ARNOLPH.

I understand you,
And know too well the fate that waits Almida,
Yet

Yet she was once my daughter, and your bride;
[to Orbassan.]

To you I leave her cause; nothing remains
For a sad father, but to die before her. [Exit.]

S C E N E IV.

KNIGHTS.

CATANIO.

To seize Almida are our orders given;
'Tis dreadful sure to see such matchless beauty,
The only hope of two illustrious houses,
Adorn'd with youth in all its prime of charms,
Shut up with shame in an untimely grave;
But 'tis our faith prophan'd, the state betray'd,
That cries aloud for vengeance. In these walls
The trait'ers call'd a hostile foreign foe:
Greece and Sicilia blushing have beheld
A light inconstant sex forsake their honour,
Nay, even their God, for these vile Mussulmen;
But that the daughter of a noble knight,
To you betroth'd, [to Orbassan] the torch of Hymen
lighted,
That she should execute so foul a plot!
Our country sullied with a crime so new,
Demands an act of unexampled justice.

L O R E D A N.

With deep regret I own her death is lawful;
Great is her guilt, and from her rank augmented,
We know th' ambitious hopes of Solyman;
He wants not talents to deceive and win,
By specious, dazzling arts the easy mind.
To him these words flagitious were address'd,
Reign in our states. They leave no room for doubt.
[To Orbassan.] I for your honour must suppress the rest,
Where is the knight, who for this guilty fair

Will

A TRAGEDY.

23

Will deign our ancient custom to fulfil,
And risk his life or glory in her cause?

CATANIO.

We feel your wrongs, Orbassan, as our own;
But Solyman shall bleed to wash this stain.
Forget the traitress; her approaching fate,
Amplly repays your outrage.

ORBASSAN.

Ah! it shocks me;
Guilty or innocent, her hand was mine:
I hear advancing steps; ye Gods! 'tis she,
To shameful death by guards remorseless led!
My soul indignant rises, for a moment
Let me in private see her.

SCENE V.

KNIGHTS.

(ALMIDA at a distance, surrounded by guards.)

ALMIDA.

Gracious powers!
Forsake me not in these last dreadful moments!

ORBASSAN.

Leave us my friends. [to the knights.]

CATANIO.

Speak to her, but remember
Our altars, honours, and our laws are outrag'd;
The state demands unwillingly its victim.

ORBASSAN.

None more than I these truths important feel;
Retire. [to the guards.]

[Exit Catanio and Doredan.]

SCENE

S C E N E VI.

ALMIDA, ORBASSAN.

ALMIDA.

Whence this intrusion? are you come
With insult to embitter my last moments?

ORBASSAN.

I bear a soul superior to such vileness.
Distinguish'd by my choice, your hand was mine;
Love was perhaps my secret guide. I know not
If tenderness or pity yet pleads for you,
Or if my heart has shook indignant off
The lover's weakness: but my haughty soul
Ill brooks the slightest notion of dishonour.
I will not stoop to think I was betray'd
For a vile tyrant, whom our faith abhors,
The state's most deadly foe! A crime so odious
Is for our country's honour and for yours,
But most for mine, too base; I'll not believe it:
All Syracuse views in me your husband,
And in your honour I respect my own;
My glory wounded calls me to defend it;
The laws of chivalry ordain these combats,
And heaven's decision hangs upon our sword.
Behold me ready——

ALMIDA.

You!

ORBASSAN.

Me, and I hope

(This step avow'd by knighthood's martial laws)
Will teach the heart you ow'd me to deserve me.
I'll not examine if your soul, deceiv'd
By arts delusive, knew a moment's weakness;
Or if aversion bid you shun our union.
The noblest minds are ever the most grateful;

From the remembrance of a former error,
 Virtue takes deeper root; nor will I henceforth
 Distrust you, or myself, by low suspicion;
 But this suffices not: I have a right,
 From pride, or love, to wish a softer feeling.
 Our laws require the solemn force of oaths,
 And one I claim; not such as stern constraint
 Dictates to weakness, or exacts from fear;
 The poor evasion of the coward soul,
 That, self-deceiv'd, prophanes the sacred altar.
 Answer without reserve my noble frankness,
 I should with scorn reject a heart divided;
 I can die for you, but I must be lov'd!

A L M I D A.

Plung'd as I am in misery's deep abyss,
 Scarcely myself, beset with death and horror!
 This gen'rous, manly, unexpected offer
 Fills my sad breast with gratitude and wonder!
 And near that grave, which soon shall close around me,
 My dying soul shall reverence and esteem you—
 But learn to know me too. My heart has wrong'd you,
 Yet scorns the thought of treachery or baseness.
 I've not betray'd my honour, or the state;
 Nor you have I betray'd—I ow'd you nothing;
 No faith I plighted, nor have you a right
 This heart to question, or arraign its feelings.
 Know then 'tis cold, ungrateful, not perfidious;
 I cannot love you, or on terms like these
 Your proffer'd aid accept. Too well I know
 The unrelenting rigour of your laws,
 My tyrants flinty breasts; nor will I here,
 With hollow boast, or Stoic affectation,
 Pretend to view unmov'd the death that waits me.
 My life was dear, I blush not to avow it;
 Nay more, I shiver at the fatal thought
 Of my black fate, of my sad father's sorrows!
 Yet in this scene of complicated woes,

E

Spite

Spite of my weakness, never can I stoop
 To buy a lengthen'd life at truth's expence.
 This frank avowal must I know offend you;
 Yet guiltier far, unworthy of myself,
 I should deserve your scorn, if I abus'd you.
 Forgive the seeming harshness of my words,
 I cannot own you as a destin'd husband,
 Or a defender. My approaching fate
 This outrage will avenge——

OR B A S S A N.

My vengeance, Madam,
 Extends no farther than my country's wrongs;
 I can repay disdain with calm contempt,
 Can smile at arrogance; nay more, forget it.
 My arm was ready to defend, to save you,
 But to your honour and my own acquitted,
 You view me henceforth only as a judge,
 Firm to my duty, to our laws obedient;
 Like them insensible, and deaf to pity,
 Unmov'd by anger, or by weak regret.

S C E N E VII.

ALMIDA. *Soldiers at a distance.*

ALMIDA.

'Tis done---I die, a self-devoted victim!
 Thou only being who deserv'st my love!
 For whom I wish'd to live, for thee I die,
 For thee condemn'd---'tis well---then be it so!
 Ha! all this infamy---a woeful father
 Sunk to the tomb with shame! these chains---a scaffold!
 Torments and death! can I support their horrors?
 My soul shakes in me! hence unworthy terrors,
 For Tancred I expire, and at this thought
 Death loses all its anguish. They may snatch
 A few unhappy moments, but disgrace
 Or punishment it is not theirs to give;

My

A TRAGEDY.

27

My soul's above them, there they cannot reach me:
In this dread hour of fate one good remains,
The voice of virtue cheering from within;
Let this suffice! ah, Tancred! what a day
Is this for thee! Sophia! [*to Sophia, who enters*] how
thy fight
Revives my sinking heart! they have not then
Deny'd me this last comfort!

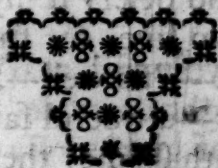
SOPHIA.

My lov'd mistress!
Would I had died before this cruel day!

ALMIDA.

I see the ministers of death approach;
My soul's last wishes bear to Tancred; tell him,
That faithful to our vows for him I die;
That his lov'd image, present to my soul,
Sooth'd every pang, and rendered death less bitter.

END of the SECOND ACT.



E 2

ACT

A L M I D A,

A C T III.

S C E N E I.

TANCRED, *follow'd by two Squires who bear his lance,
buckler, &c.* ALDAMON. *Soldiers.*

TANCRED.

HAIL to these native shores! Immortal powers! How my heart glows with rapture at their sight! O Aldamon! 'tis heaven itself has planted Deep in each gen'rous breast, our country's love, Mix'd with, nay stronger than the love of fame, Or liberty, or life—to thy kind zeal, I owe my safe return. From this blest hour, Fortune shall smile, shall crown my rising hopes; Thou worthy friend! thou know'st not all I owe thee.

ALDAMON.

Your goodness rates my services too high;
I'm but a soldier, a plain citizen.

TANCRED.

As thou I am, for citizens are brothers;
Long have I prov'd thy faith.

ALDAMON.

My only merit,
Is to have follow'd you with zeal sincere;
Taught by your bright example, I too learnt
To tread the path of glory. By the ties
Of love and duty, to your house devoted,
All that warm gratitude can pay, I owe.

TANCRED.

Thou kindest friend! thou ow'st me only friendship.
Behold these sacred ramparts; how my soul

Pants

Pants to defend 'em ! Venerable walls,
 Dear to my heart, which here first beat with life,
 Am I then banish'd from ye ! Say Aldamon,
 What happy spot contains the fair Almida ?

ALDAMON.

That ancient building is her father's palace ;
 This street leads to it : further yon' behold,
 Th' august tribunal, where our warrior knights,
 And awful senate meet ; the public law,
 Equal and firm to fix ; the commonwealth
 To govern and protect ; and long ere now
 The faithless Muffulman had met his fate,
 Had not their best support in you been absent.
 There hang their bucklers, cyphers, and devices,
 Which to the world, the splendor of their deeds,
 With warlike pomp proclaim ; amidst these names
 To glory sacred, Tancred's name is wanting.

TANCRED.

Let it be still conceal'd, for hatred waits it ;
 Elsewhere perhaps 'tis known enough to fame.
 Suspend on these lone walls my cancell'd cyphers,
 Unknown they may escape the rage of faction ;
 Place here my arms, simple and unadorn'd,
 The emblem of my sorrows : this plain buckler,
 This hemlet honour'd by no graceful plumage.

'Twas thus I wore them in the field of glory,
 Of my device be careful : to my breast
 Dear and auspicious in the fight it cheer'd me ;
 The words emphatical, are *love* and *honour*.
 To these brave knights who hither bend their steps,
 Say that a warrior, by his choice unknown,
 Is here arriv'd, to follow them to war,
 And bounds his hopes to imitate their glory.
 Who is their chief ?

ALDAMON.

ALMIDA,

ALDAMON.

My lord, 'twas Arnolph.

TANCRED.

The father of Almida!

ALDAMON.

Long he suffer'd

The hate injurious of an odious faction;
 But now his just authority regain'd,
 His name and probity by all are cherish'd.
 By age enfeebled——Orbassan succeeds him.

TANCRED.

Ha! my dire foe. He whose unmanly rage
 Pursued my infant years, with deadliest hate;
 To whom I owe the ruin of my house!
 What rumour too is that, which fame has spread
 Of his audacious rashness? Is it true,
 That he has practis'd on a father's weakness?
 Nay more, obtain'd the hope of his alliance,
 And rais'd his wish presumptuous to his daughter?

ALDAMON.

Confus'dly yesterday, I heard it murmur'd.
 Far from the town, retir'd within that fort
 Where I receiv'd you, little do I know
 What in these walls has past; I love them not,
 They hold your persecutors.

TANCRED.

In thy bosom

My heart reposes with unbounded trust;
 Fly to Almida: tell her an unknown,
 From his first years devoted to her mother,
 A friend to all her race, with ardent pray'r,
 Entreats a secret interview.

ALDAMON.

ALDAMON.

I go;

Nor in her family am I a stranger;
 Ought that belongs to you, will there be welcome.
 I fly to serve you, and I hope success.

S C E N E II.

TANCRED. *His Squires at a distance.*

TANCRED.

Ye guardian powers! who smile on love and virtue,
 'Twas ye who led me hither. How my breast
 Throbs with desire and transport, to behold
 Her whom my soul adores! The time that stands
 Between us and our hopes, seems to the mind
 A space eternal. Something cold like doubt
 Steals o'er my joy: yet what should I mistrust?
 Almida must be true; and from dishonour,
 The only ill I fear, her faith ensures me.
 Far from Illyria, and the camp of Cæsar,
 For her at last I seek my country's bosom;
 Ungrateful country! yet amidst my woes,
 After Almida, dearest to my heart.
 Whence is this Orbassan? what his exploits?
 What laurels grace his brow, that he should dare
 With soaring pride aspire to my Almida?
 A prize which only heroes should contend for;
 And mine by all the sacred laws of love;
 Nor shall he win her from me, but with life.
 Nay more, her truth would reach beyond my grave,
 Her gen'rous mind, would scorn another's vows,
 Her heart is faithful, constant, worthy mine,
 Above dissimulation, fears, or weakness.

SCENE

A L M I D A,

S C E N E III.

TANCRED, ALDAMON.

TANCRED.

Ah! thou hast seen, hast spoke with my Almida;
Lead me this moment to her—gods! thou weep'st!

ALDAMON.

Let us away; misfortune, shame and terror,
Dwell in these hated walls—

TANCRED.

What of Almida?

ALDAMON.

Enquire no more, and let us hasten hence;
For guilt and horror taint the very air!

TANCRED.

Has Orbassan prevail'd? O matchless traitress!
Her father's enemy and mine——

ALDAMON.

Her father
This very morning sign'd their nuptial contract.

TANCRED.

Have I then liv'd to this excess of misery!

ALDAMON.

Nay more, your confiscated wealth and fortune
Were to have swell'd your rival's odious triumph;
Who from the senate has obtain'd——

TANCRED.

The wretch!
He robs me of what a hero heeds not;
But thou, Almida, his—it shall not be.

ALDAMON.

A TRAGEDY.

33

ALDAMON.

Far deeper woes the angry fates prepare you.

TANCRED.

Speak, cruel! speak, nor keep me on the rack.

ALDAMON.

Almida destin'd to your rival's arms,
Already blaz'd with hymeneal torches
The shining temple. Round the holy altar,
In sacred vestments stood th' expecting priests,
Waiting in vain the bride—her perjur'd heart
Both you, and Orbassan, at once betray'd.

TANCRED.

Mysterious fate! for whom?

ALDAMON.

For Solyman.

TANCRED.

How! Solyman! ill omens wait his name,
He once in secret sigh'd for her at Byzantium;
But she repuls'd his vows with cold disdain,
And generous own'd the preference she gave me:
Away! it cannot be, 'tis some delusion;
Her gentle mind, the seat of every virtue,
Could never stoop to this——

ALDAMON.

With grief I speak it,

The horrid tale is told by every tongue.

TANCRED.

No: 'tis the work of envy and imposture.

“ Proscrib'd in infancy, by sorrow rear'd,

“ Self form'd, and early train'd in honour's school,

“ Hunted from state to state, have I not suffer'd

“ All that unfeeling hatred could invent,

“ To blast my fame?

Alas! too well I know

F

What

What impious rage can do. Almida virtuous
Is sure a suffering victim---but I trifle---
This instant lead me to her, I must see her,
Know all her wrongs---lead on.

ALDAMON.

Ah! stop, my lord;
Alas! for words to cloath the dreadful tale.
Torn from the bosom of her wretched father
She is in chains---

TANCRED.

In chains!

ALDAMON.

And now, even here,
Doom'd to the scaffold, by a rigorous sentence;
An ignominious death---

TANCRED.

Struck to the earth,
By heav'ns immediate flash, the dying wretch
Feels less amazing horror, than thy words
Pour thro' my soul!

ALDAMON.

Alas! if she dies guiltless
A deed more rueful never stain'd the world!
Thro'out the town, one general murmur runs
Of pity and surprize: yet none dare more
Than sigh, or weep.

TANCRED.

Whilst I have life, she dies not.

ALDAMON.

Tho' fill'd with terror at so dire a scene,
The people flock innumeros to behold it;
Eager to view a sight of woe, they gather
Curious and turbulent around her prison,

Haft'ning

A TRAGEDY.

35

Hast'ning the hour of fate to feed their wonder!
This place, these portals, silent now and desert,
Will soon be throng'd with crouding citizens,
Ah! let us hence!

TANCRED.

What reverend figure's that?
Pale grief sits on his front; with trembling steps
He issues from the temple; a sad train
Follow, and seem to share his heart's affliction.

ALDAMON.

'Tis the unhappy father——

TANCRED.

Let me meet him;
Mean time retire: be careful to conceal me.
How my soul pities him!

SCENE IV.

TANCRED, ARNOLPH. ALDAMON *at a distance.*

ARNOLPH.

Hasten, kind Gods,
Death's friendly stroke, to save me from distraction!

TANCRED.

Most noble Arnolph, you behold in me
One of those knights, who in these holy wars,
Beneath your sacred banners seek for glory;
Nay, I came here to meet---forgive my weakness---

[*agitated.*]

Your sorrows move my soul---O let me mingle
With yours these tears that sympathetic rise!

ARNOLPH.

By all abandon'd, no kind voice but thine
Has dar'd speak comfort to a wretched father.
Excuse these eyes, obscur'd by age and grief;
Who art thou?

F 2

TANCRED.

A L M I D A,

TANCRED.

I'm a stranger,
Full of respect, of pity for your woes.
Like you unfortunate, taught by my own
Too well I guess the pangs that wring your soul;
Anxious----yet fearful----I would learn the cause---
Can it be true---your daughter---

ARNOLPH.

Yes---she dies---

TANCRED.

Gods! is she guilty?

ARNOLPH.

Spare a father's blush,
Who childless had not known the dreadful curse,
In his last days, of infamy and woe!

TANCRED.

Yet fame spoke loudly of her worth and beauty.
Tho' born in distant climes, inspir'd esteem
And veneration for Almida fill'd me.
I should have thought had virtue left the skies,
Her throne on earth had been your daughter's bosom,

ARNOLPH.

What aggravates my grief, and to the grave
Drives me with shame and rage, is that she loves.
She glories in her crime. Thus not a knight
Will stir to save her. Tho' with deep regret
They sign'd unanimous the deadly sentence,
In spite of our most ancient solemn law,
Which grants the fair, when injur'd or accus'd,
A knight, whose gen'rous arm in single combat
Her cause may fight, and if victorious clear her;
O shame to these white hairs! my daughter dies,
And not one knight appears----

TANCRED.

One will appear.

ARNOLPH.

A TRAGEDY.

37

ARNOLPH.

Can there be hope for a sad father?

TANCRED.

Yes,

One will appear; not for Almida's sake,
Guilty she merits not the hero's sword;
But your fair fame, your virtue, and your years
Deserve protection, and will find a champion.

ARNOLPH.

Methinks you raise my sinking soul from death:
Yet I must doubt---who will, alas! for us
Enter the lists? all shun us; every heart
Turns with aversion from us. Ah, you flatter;
Whose arm will venture---

TANCRED.

Mine.

ARNOLPH.

Yours!

TANCRED.

Yes, mine;

And if the gods should grant my sword success,
The only favour or reward I ask,
Is not to be detain'd; and by Almida
Unseen, unknown, immediate to depart.

ARNOLPH.

Sure heaven in pity sent thee to my aid;
But tell me first to whom in my misfortunes
Such kind respect, such gratitude I owe;
All speaks thee noble and of high descent.

TANCRED.

Arnolph explore no further; my dark fate,
In sorrow's gloom plung'd deep, would shun enquiry.

SCENE

A L M A I D A,

S C E N E V.

TANCRED, ARNOLPH, ORBASSAN. *Knights, Attendants.*

ORBASSAN.

[*to Arnolph.*

The state in danger asks our present thoughts;
At dawn we purpos'd from our walls to issue;
We are prevented. Those who here betray'd us
Have doubtless warn'd the foe, and Solyma
Determines now to tempt the fate of battle.
We'll march to meet him; the mean while, my lord,
Retire from hence, avoid a fight too dreadful.

ARNOLPH.

Enough, my lord. The only hope that's left me
Is to fall bravely in th' approaching combat.
This valiant knight shall thither guide my steps,
And tho' my race is blasted by dishonour,
This arm shall perish fighting for the state.

ORBASSAN.

Such noble sentiments become you well;
Go to the field, and shun this dreadful scene,
The horrid pomp of death, which here approaches,
'T would be too terrible!

ARNOLPH.

Just gods, assist me!

ORBASSAN.

From this sad view avert a father's eye.
My place and rigorous duty here detain me,
To keep in bounds a giddy daring people:
Our laws require this solemn dreadful act!
Dire as they are, I must protect them here;
But you, not destin'd to this cruel charge,
No power can force you to look sternly on,
While a lov'd daughter bleeds!--retire---they come.

TANCRED.

No. Father! stay---

ORBASSAN,

A TRAGEDY.

39

ORBASSAN.

Ha! who art thou?

TANCRED.

Thy foe;

This old man's friend---perhaps too his avenger;
Nor less than thou important to the state.

SCENE VI.

The scene opening discovers ALMIDA in chains, as led to execution, surrounded by guards. Knights, people, &c. fill the scene.

ARNOLPH.

Support me generous stranger---'tis my daughter!

TANCRED.

Gods! is it thus we meet!

ALMIDA.

Eternal goodness!

All time before thy eye omniscient stands;
Thou read'st my soul, and thou alone art just!
"Drove on by passion, blinded oft by fury,
"Weak mortals talk, condemn, and judge by hazard.
Knights---countrymen---who in the bloody sentence
That robs me of my life have borne a share,
'Tis not to you I stoop to clear my fame;
That God who sees us, must decide between us.
Tame instruments of stern unjust oppression,
'Tis true I scorn'd your laws, nay more, I broke 'em;
Tyrannical they had no pow'r to bind me.
A father would have forc'd my hand unwilling;
I disobey'd him. Orbassan I slighted;
Haughty and rude, he thought to bend me to him.
These are my crimes, if they are worthy death.
Strike---but first learn the secret of my heart;
The soul prepar'd at heaven's high throne to answer,
Addresses man unmov'd and void of fear.
Know then ye witnesses of my sad fate,

And

And you my father, you at least whose kindness
Should have prevented——Gods! what do I see?

Immortal powers! 'tis he!——I sink——assist——
[seeing Tancred.]

[faints in Sophia's arms.]

TANCRÉD.

Her perjur'd heart shrinks at my sight—no matter—
Suspend ye ministers of death your vengeance,

Stay your dire hand; I here assume her cause;

I am her knight; her desolated father

Avows my arm, to innocence propitious:

Open the lists, and let the judges sit.

Thou haughty Orbassan I here defy thee;

[throws his gauntlet.]

Or snatch my life, or meet from me thy fate.

Thy name and deeds are not to fame unknown;

The gage of combat here I throw before thee---dar'st
thou take up?

ORBASSAN.

Thy arrogance but ill deserves this honour;

[points to his squire to take up the glove.]

Yet since a father deigns admit thy claim,

I will vouchsafe to measure swords with thee

To crush thy bold defiance. What thy rank,

Or whence art thou? these arms obscure announce

Few signs of glory.

TANCRÉD.

Soon thy spoils may deck them;

My name's a secret, such as yet I mean it,

But thou shalt learn it in the field. Let's go.

ORBASSAN.

Open the barrier. Let Almida free,

'Till the event of this slight combat's over;

And know my friends, that as I quit the lists

I head your troops, and march to save the state.

SCENE

A TRAGEDY.

41

SCENE VII.

ARNOLPH, ALMIDA. *The guards take off her chains.*

ALMIDA.

Merciful powers! where am I? ah! he's gone!
Sure 'twas a vision! some angelic form
Assum'd his shape.

ARNOLPH.

Fear has disturb'd her senses;
Speak my Almida, 'tis thy father calls thee.

ALMIDA.

Why do you soothe me thus? am I not lost?
Have you not given me up to shame and death?

ARNOLPH.

O thou all-gracious heaven! whose hand supreme
Has taken her defence, admit my pray'r,
Her fault forgive, or clear her innocence!
Thy will suspends our fate: must I adore
Thy mercy, or thy justice, active here?
Tell me, Almida, tell me in what light
Must I behold thee?

ALMIDA.

With a father's kindness.

On the grave's brink with tottering feet I stand;
Still o'er my head the knife uplifted hangs.
As to my honour 'tis unblemish'd, pure.
But ah! in pity lead me, lead me hence!
Save a distress'd, an almost dying daughter
From this dire scene, from an insulting crowd,
Who gaze un pitying at my strange misfortunes,
View all my sorrows with unhallow'd eye,
Stare at my tears---those bitter tears, just heav'n!
Shed in a cause so virtuous, so unknown!

END of the THIRD ACT.

G

ACT

A C T IV.

S C E N E I.

TANCRED, LOREDAN. *Knights. A warlike march.
TANCRED's arms borne before him.*

LOREDAN.

THE valour of thy arm, most noble knight,
Has robb'd us of a brave and glorious warrior,
Whose breast beat fervent with his country's love,
Nor was his courage to thy own inferior.
Reveal thy name, thy destiny.

TANCRED.

In a pensive and melancholy attitude.

Orbassan

Learn'd it in death, and to the shades below
My fatal secret and my hatred bore.
Seek not to penetrate my gloomy fate;
Accept my services, it matters not
Who, or from whence I am.

LOREDAN.

Remain unknown,
Since such thy wish. The daring Saracen
His impious ensigns in our plains displays;
Defend with us our laws and sacred faith.
Our best support is lost, do thou replace him,
And in thy valour give us back our hero.

TANCRED.

My sword is yours; in Syracuse's cause
I join sincere; nay, Solyman, perhaps,
More than the state, is my deep enemy;
More than you can, I hate him—but no more—
Behold me ready.

LOREDAN.

LOREDAN.

Thou shalt head our troops :
Expect from Syracuse all that the warmth
Of boundless gratitude can offer merit.

TANCRED.

Such is my fate---that gratitude were vain,
Bestow'd on one, whose woes have made him thankless;
This heart rejects it---these ill-fated walls
Hold nothing henceforth that can tempt my wishes
If I can serve you---if I die unhappy,
I court nor pity, nor reward, nor glory,
Vengeance alone---yes, Solyman shall feel me!

LOREDAN.

Your hopes are ours, time urges. Let us go
To the important business of this day;
Let all our thoughts be turn'd: and you, my lord,
Shall instant be advis'd, when to that post,
Where the foe hopes, but vainly, soon to force us,
'Tis proper to repair. Now on the point,
In the vile blood of infidels to bathe,
Our thirsty swords, all other cares must yield.

[Exit Loredan.]

TANCRED.

My only wish is death, and great revenge.

S C E N E II.

TANCRED, ALDAMON.

TANCRED.

Ah! little do they know the secret pangs,
That harrow up my breast. I could have borne
Pain, disappointment, poverty, or shame;
All that embitters life; all that the gods
Pour in their wrath severe on wretched man!

But where I lov'd, where I had treasur'd up
My soul's best hopes; there to be lost, betray'd,
Is death like anguish! misery supreme!

ALDAMON.

My dearest lord! your sorrows deeply move me,
Nor know I what to counsel. Yet methinks,
You ought to see Almida. 'Tis a custom,
By immemorial use made almost sacred,
To meet the fair, who owes you life and honour.

TANCRED.

No Aldamon, I must not, cannot see her.

ALDAMON.

Not see her! you who brav'd death to save her,
Can you fly her?

TANCRED.

I must, and she deserves it.

ALDAMON,

Yet you fought for her.

TANCRED.

Perjur'd as she is,
Could I support, ye gods, to see her perish?
Even had I lov'd her less, could I forsake her?
'Twas mine to save, but never to forgive her.
" Ah let her live! and let sad Tancred die!
" Yes Aldamon, yes, she shall learn to weep
" Too late my wretched fate; if yet one spark
" Of truth or pity lives within her bosom.
O heavens! to what excess I doated on her!
She bore the semblance of such grace and virtue,
I could have thought her word, her single word,
More sacred far than altars, oaths, or ought
That man has yet invented for our reverence.

ALDAMON,

A TRAGEDY.

ALDAMON.

Is all then barbarous, or perfidious here?
Your name was mark'd in black proscription's page;
Inhuman laws, and faithless love pursue you;
Ah! let us hence, and seek some happier clime.

TANCRED.

Gods! by what charm even now she rises on me!
Lovely and virtuous as I once believ'd her;
Adorn'd with dignity and modest grace,
Delight and rapture; all that fancy paints,
Or nature can bestow. O faithless maid!
Perfidious, cruel, still alas ador'd!
Why does thy image cling around my heart;
Unman me, sink me, thus to fond complaints,
And all the weakness of a woman's love?

ALDAMON.

Ah! would to heaven, there was some healing art,
To calm your tortur'd mind. Awhile you talk'd
Of envy's lies, and slander's cruel tongue;
Perhaps she's innocent.

TANCRED.

Would there were doubt,
One slender doubt, for eager hope to seize,
But all is prov'd; her perfidy is certain;
She was ador'd in secret by the Moor,
He ask'd her hand a pledge of offer'd peace.
Could he have dar'd thus, had he not been lov'd?
They were of concert; and in vain I doubted,
In vain I trusted to my heart. Her father
Confess'd to me her crime; nay she avows it,
These eyes have seen, have read that cursed letter.
'May you acknowledg'd reign in Syracuse,
As in this heart you reign.' Is there a name
For treachery like this?

ALDAMON.

A L M I D A,

ALDAMON.

Alas! forget her;
Learn to despise a false ungrateful woman.

TANCRED.

And to complete my shame, she fondly dreamt
This Solyman was something more than human.
Light and capricious sex! by outward shew,
And pomp seduc'd; unable to distinguish
The love that springs from harmony of souls,
And mutual choice, above the stupid forms
Of vanity and pride; joy far beyond
The gross desire: the paradise of minds!
Unfelt, and unconceiv'd by vulgar breasts.
But I'll despise the traitress, scorn her arts,
And throw this unbecoming weakness from me.

S C E N E III.

TANCRED, ALDAMON, CATANIO, and other Knights.

CATANIO.

The army moves, my lord, and time is precious.

TANCRED.

True I have linger'd---how her faithless image
Still winds around my soul!

S C E N E IV.

TANCRED, ALMIDA, SOPHIA. Knights.

Almida running to Tancred with precipitation.

ALMIDA.

Thou god-like youth!
Sole master of my fate; oh! at thy feet
No let me kneel, it is not sure beneath me. *Tancred*
[eyes her, but turns aside.
Why

A TRAGEDY.

47

Why dost thou shun me? who can blame my transports?

The warm effusion of a grateful heart!

Wing'd by impatience, I outflaw my father.

I dare not call thee by that name ador'd,

Or speak the secret transports of my soul:

Why is thy eye turn'd from me? gracious heaven!

Cannot I see thee in this fatal spot,

But watch'd, surrounded by that hated crew, *[looking round.]*

Dumb consternation hangs upon thy brow!

I dare not speak more freely; this constraint——

Why that averted look? Thou hear'st me not.

TANCRED.

[with a voice faltering and interrupted by sighs.]

Return---comfort your father, whom I honour---

I'm summon'd hence by more important cares!

To you, to him, I have fulfill'd my duty,

And am rewarded---too much gratitude

May be a burden---I relieve you from it---

Your heart is free---bestow it as you please---

Live happy---whilst I seek death---farewell---

Exit Tancred.

S C E N E V.

ALMIDA, SOPHIA.

ALMIDA.

Am I awake?

From the drear tomb am I indeed emerg'd?

Immortal powers! and is it then for this

Ye give me back my life? has fate spun out

For this curst hour, the remnant of my days?

SOPHIA.

Perhaps he fear'd without disguise——

ALMIDA.

A L M I D A.

Was that

My Tancred's voice? didst thou remark, Sophia,
 His haughty coldness, his insulting pride,
 The calm disdain with which he dar'd oppress me?
 Hatred and scorn beam'd from his angry eye.
 Did he but save me from my cruel tyrants,
 To plunge himself the dagger in my heart?

S O P H I A.

Rage, or confusion glow'd upon his cheek,
 His falt'ring voice affected seeming coldness:
 Yet his turn'd eye conceal'd a rising tear.

A L M I D A.

Amazing change! perplexity and grief
 Fill my astonish'd soul! can he be jealous?
 Of whom? or why?---in vain I pause or think;
 Reflexion lends no light to guide my thoughts.
 'Tis mystery all! A labyrinth of woe!
 Yet 'tis to him, I owe these lengthen'd days,
 This poor remainder of a life I hate,
 Which but for him, had never been in danger.

S O P H I A.

Alas! he knows not this. The public voice
 Misleads the firmest heart. That slave, his death,
 Your letter found upon him unaddress'd,
 Has left suspicion free to form conjectures.
 Then the report that Solyman had ask'd,
 Presuming from success, your hand in marriage.
 Your gen'rous silence, that conceal'd your lover,
 From the pursuit of unrelenting foes,
 May in appearance wrong you; and perhaps——

A L M I D A.

How! wouldst thou hint that Tancred thinks me false?

A TRAGEDY.

49

SOPHIA.

Forgive a lover, if deceiv'd, he---

ALMIDA.

No:

Had a whole world combin'd to paint me guilty,
His single heart against a world mislead'
Should have stood forth, a witness to my honour.
Was it from pity then he sav'd my life?
How I despise the thought! why have I liv'd
Thus to be made a wretch, the sport of fortune?
Ungrateful Tancred! Can'st thou then suspect me?
But know my heart, superior to its wrongs,
From this sad moment casts thee off for ever!
Can I forget the life I owe him? No:
Yet if he thinks me of his love unworthy,
'Tis he that sinks indeed! unworthy mine!

SOPHIA.

Suppose he knew not——

ALMIDA.

Vain excuse! he knew not!

Me he should have known; he should have learnt
Better to prize the heart he dares mistrust.
My soul's as haughty as his arm is brave,
As great, as true, as generous as his own;
More tender far! and not like his suspicious!
I'll root him hence, and with him all mankind;
A wretched herd, or wicked all or false;
Cruel or weak; deceiving or deceiv'd.
Wrapt up and buried in my deep affliction,
I'll fly from Tancred, and a faithless world.

H

SCENE

S C E N E VI.

ALMIDA, ARNOLPH. *Attendants.*

ARNOLPH.

[supported by his Squires.]

Lead on, my friends: support my sinking years;
 The battle sounds. Ah let me let me clasp
 Within these aged arms that gen'rous youth:
 Is he already fled? tell me, Almida,
 To whom I owe thy life?

ALMIDA.

'Tis to a hero,

Whose name I dar'd not breathe; you had proscrib'd
 him.

To whom was meant that intercepted letter,
 Source of mistakes, and misery exhaustless!
 The first of mortals, tho' to me unjust,
 To Tancred——

ARNOLPH.

Heavens! did I hear thee right?

ALMIDA.

Alas! the sad disorder of my soul
 Has urg'd this secret from me. Ah! I tremble
 Lest my imprudence should once more be fatal.

ARNOLPH.

He Tancred!

ALMIDA.

ALMIDA.

Lives there on earth another,
Noble and brave as he is?

ARNOLPH.

On whose head,
Our barbarous senate pour'd its deadly vengeance!
He rescues thee from death; he risks his life,
For this ungrateful state, whilst we tear from him,
His honour, fortunes, all a hero values.
How short, alas! is human comprehension!
Presumptuous judges! in our erring balance,
Blindly we weigh the life, the fate of mortals,
By the weak guidance of fallacious prudence
Bewilder'd into cruelty!

ALMIDA.

My father!
Ah! let me open all my griefs before you!
Tancred has saved my life; yet I am wretch'd,
Doubly undone! for what, great gods! is life
Debas'd by scorn? 'tis but a lengthen'd curse!
You must repair my wrongs; restore my fame;
Does Tancred think I'll wear a paltry life,
Made worthless by his cold suspicious treatment?
You must dispel his doubts,

ARNOLPH.

I will with joy;
But calm awhile thy troubled breast and tell me.

ALMIDA.

Ah! let us fly, each moment is an age.

H 2

ARNOLPH.

ARNOLPH.

But stop——

ALMIDA.

How stop! by heavens I will not;

I'll to the field: am I not grown familiar
 With death and horror: think you that in battle
 They wear a look terrific to the soul!
 Like that vile scaffold you could lead me to?
 I will not be refus'd: indeed I will not,
 Grief will have way, you owe me surely this:
 Must I be twice abandon'd by a father?

ARNOLPH.

Has reason lost all empire o'er thy mind?
 Speak thy design; it freezes me with terror;
 Some strange emotion works thro' all thy frame.
 Ah! yield not to the transports of thy breast!
 'Tis not with us, as in some distant climes,
 Where women less confin'd by rigid custom,
 March to the field, and tread the hero's path.
 Our manners and our laws forbid it.

ALMIDA.

Gods!

What laws? what manners? cruel and unjust!
 The iron dictates of unfeeling minds!
 Full of its woes, my rising soul disdains them.
 If I must listen, talk to me of grief,
 Of Tancred lost; of my unheard of misery!
 Hence with your laws, inhuman as they are.
 They could have torne me from a father's arms,
 Dragg'd me to death; expos'd me bound in chains,
 To the bold gaze of each insulting eye!
 Heav'n give me patience! shall I hear them pleaded,

To keep me from the field of honest danger;
 Led by a father to defend my honour?
 Must we sad victims to your savage notions,
 Your arbitrary rules, phantastic, cruel!
 Appear in public only for dishonour,
 To grace a scaffold, or to glut your fury!
 I'll bear no more, I'm weary of oppression!
 You tremble, Sir! Ah know you should have trembled,
 When poorly stooping to your haughty foes,
 You could with that curst Orbassan unite,
 Against the innocent—against the hero,
 Who sav'd your wretched daughter from destruction!

ARNOLPH.

Heap not more miseries on thy sinking father,
 Nor stretch too far thy right to say I'm guilty—
 I am---I feel it---and I am self-condemn'd!---
 I'll seek out Tancred, conduct him to thee---
 Do thou detain her here, I'll instantly return;
 Observe her steps, Sophia---
 Respect my sorrows---and if yet thy heart
 Is not grown senseless to a parent's voice,
 O! let me perish by the Moorish darts,
 And not by thy upbraidings.

[Exit Arnolph.]

S C E N E VII.

ALMIDA, SOPHIA.

ALMIDA.

I'll not be stop't---Tancred detests me, loaths me.
 But haughty hero! taught by thy example,
 I'll to the field and combat by thy side;
 Brave all the darts that fly around thy head.
 This bosom bar'd shall meet the vengeful steel

Levell'd

Levell'd at thine. Thus, Tancred, will I quit
 The mighty debt I owe. Yes I'll out-do thee,
 Surpass thee far in exquisite revenge!
 Gasp out my life, even in thy cruel arms!
 Abhor and scorn thee, with my latest breath,
 And dying plunge in thy unfeeling heart,
 The dreadful sting the dagger of remorse!
 The wild, the bitter agony of love,
 Eternal grief, and unavailing anguish,
 And all the horrors of my wretched fate!

Exeunt Almida, and Sophia,

END of the FOURTH ACT,



ACT

A TRAGEDY.

ts

A C T V.

S C E N E I.

*Knights. People. Knights, &c. with swords drawn.
Warlike music. Soldiers carrying trophies.*

L O R E D A N.

PEOPLE prepare the joyful song of triumph!
 Raise high to heaven the grateful voice of thanks!
 Success is from above: our feeble efforts
 Were impotent and vain, by heaven unaided.
 The arm divine has crush'd those impious robbers,
 " The fierce despoilers of a hundred realms.
 " Erect your trophies on their bloody relicks,
 " And trampling in the dust their smother'd fury,
 Enrich our sacred temples with their spoils.
 " But noble Arnolph now demands our care;
 " We hope the public joy will soothe his grief,
 " And make in spite of all his past misfortunes,
 " The patriot happy; tho' the father sighs.
 Where is that hero valiant, and unknown,
 To whose brave aid we owe this glorious day?
 Why with our knights is he not here return'd?
 Is he so cold, so careless of his triumph?
 " Thinks he perhaps we're of his glory jealous?
 " We are great enough to view him without envy.
 Near [*to Catanio.*] you my lord he fought——whence
 is it then
 He takes no part in the loud general joy?

C A T A N I O.

When you had barr'd the road that leads to Etna;
 Beyond your view, and near the river's side,

I press'd

I prest the foes who 'ventur'd to resist us.
There, where the war with thickest fury rag'd
Onward he rush'd impetuous and alone:
We wonder'd much his courage did not shew
Of that calm kind which marks the hero's soul;
Sedate and cool, tho' havock storms around!
His seem'd the offspring of despair and fury;
His broken voice, his gloomy haggard looks,
Express'd the strong disorder of his mind!
Often and loud he call'd on Solyman.
Almida's name he utter'd too with sighs,
He call'd her false, but down his burning cheek,
I saw the tear of rage and sorrow fall!
Eager he courted death; but on his helm,
Conquest resistless sat! the more regardless
He seem'd of life, the more he rose in terrors!
All sunk before us, chiefly from his arm.
But when we hither turn'd our steps, he shunn'd us;
With looks cast down, an image of affliction,
Mournful he stood, and seem'd of life abhorrent!
His eye sought Aldamon, who hasten'd to him;
And as he press'd him, weeping to his breast,
Farewell he cried—I go—and 'tis for ever!
Then swift as light'ning vanish'd from our sight.
At the same instant I beheld Almida
Dishevell'd, wild, amidst a croud of soldiers;
Pale and disfigur'd, death was in her looks,
Frantic she flew, and call'd on Tancred's name.
With lingering pace her mournful father follow'd;
Now bath'd in tears, confus'd, he leads her hither,
And publishes aloud, that he whose valour
Has sav'd his daughter, and aveng'd the state,
Is Tancred--him who with united voices,
This very morning we proscrib'd, condemn'd.
What in this crisis must we do?

LOREDAN.

A TRAGEDY.

57

LOREDAN.

Repent;

Detest our rashness: to persist were vileness.
We ought to blush thus to have wrong'd a hero.
Too oft has truth and merit been condemn'd
By fury's voice, which knows not to distinguish;
But when they shine with full conviction on us,
Reverence, and sacred pity should await them.

SCENE II.

KNIGHTS. ARNOLPH. ALMIDA *at a distance, her hair
floating in disorder.*

ARNOLPH.

Fly ye brave warriors—fly to rescue Tancred;
Drove on by zeal, peril and death surround him!
Single he fights against a croud of foes,
Whose rallied forces press collected on him!
Gods! I could curse these arms by age unnerv'd
Ill suited to my soul! Ah fly! be quick,
And save this noble valiant youth!

LOREDAN.

We go,
And will conduct him safe. His valour now
Rises to rashness, which we can't approve.

SCENE III.

ARNOLPH, ALMIDA.

ARNOLPH.

Upon this hoary head, at last with pity
The gods indulgent smile! They give me back
A dear lov'd child, whose menac'd dreadful fate

I

Drew

Drew the last drop of comfort from my soul!
 Why dost thou droop? our sorrows are no more;
 Why thus desponding dost thou turn aside?

A L M I D A.

Ah! I can taste no joy till I see Tancred
 Secure of life, and just to his Almida.

A R N O L P H.

I pity thy afflictions: few have tasted
 Misfortunes deeper or severer trials.
 " Too well I know there are a sort of wounds
 " That pierce where most it feels the generous mind
 " With deadly anguish hardly to be cur'd.
 Yet when kind heaven extends the cup of joy,
 To dash it from us were an impious act!
 Then be of comfort. Tancred has been hated,
 Pursu'd and wrong'd, but now approv'd and honour'd;
 Fortune prepares him all thy heart can wish,
 Public and private blessings, love and glory.

A L M I D A.

You talk at ease, my lord, while I am tost
 In wild anxiety from hope to fear.
 Why are they not returned? perhaps he dies!

A R N O L P H.

Fear's trembling pencil, ever dipt in black,
 Paints to the mind strange images of woe.
 But hope the best; if Tancred presses on
 In quest of glory, 'tis a noble wish,
 In stronger day to set forth our injustice.
 Coldly with: asur'd steps to do their duty
 Contents the vulgar mind. Not so the hero,
 Led by the impulse of his higher soul,
 A god-like glow, which scorns the narrow rules
 Of prudence unaspiring, on he goes
 Beyond our utmost hopes. Thus fights thy Tancred.
 Open thy bosom then to peace and joy;

Tancred

Tancred shall know thy truth, and hate his error.
 The people rise already, mov'd with wonder
 And pity at his fate. If yet a doubt
 Of thee should haunt his breast, one word from me
 Will dissipate the cloud——

ALMIDA.

I value not
 A headlong people, or their vile affronts,
 Their fury credulous, their fickle pity;
 Or the vain voice of public approbation,
 Sweet to the tranquil heart! but mine is shut,
 Deafen'd by miseries to all sense of joy.
 My peace, my fame depends alone on Tancred;
 And know I'd rather meet a thousand deaths,
 Than live one moment unesteem'd by him.
 Know too, for wherefore should I now conceal it?
 I in my brave deliverer lov'd a husband.
 My mother dying heard our tender vows;
 Her last sad accents, fervent pour'd to God,
 Were breath'd in blessings on our mutual loves!
 With her cold hands our trembling ones she join'd;
 Our hands that filial clos'd her lifeless eyes!
 Kneeling and weeping we attested heaven!
 The sacred corpse, that breathless lay before us,
 Nature and you——and you, unhappy father!
 That we would wait, in your paternal bosom,
 Our vows to bind, made sacred by your blessing.
 Your life's decline, we said, how vainly said!
 Should by our tender cares go down in peace.
 Scaffolds and prisons since have prov'd our altars;
 My love, my husband seeks a cruel death;
 And shame and misery is my bitter portion.

ARNOLPH.

By heaven! thy melancholy tale awakes
 The sad idea of long extinguish'd grief,
 And cruel recollection. In thy voice

And plaintive accents fancy seems to trace
 The dear remembrance of thy mother's softness.
 But whither do I err! We shall be happy--

ALMIDA.

Made doubtful by its woes my fearful heart---

S C E N E IV.

ARNOLPH, ALMIDA, SOPHIA.

SOPHIA.

My dearest mistress! share the public joy;
 Tancred has greatly fought; beneath his arm
 Sink the last remnants of a shatter'd army.
 A victim glorious to our country's vengeance,
 And for your wrongs, a great, and just atonement,
 The haughty Solyman, at Tancred's feet,
 Bleeding and lifeless, stains the dusty field.
 Fame spreads the news; the people flock around him,
 Name him their hero, their support and glory!
 One warrior only had pursu'd his steps,
 The faithful Aldamon, whom once you knew;

[to Arnolph.

For when our knights to succour him arriv'd,
 The war was over, Tancred was triumphant.
 Hear you these shouts? they speak him near and glo-
 rious.

A thousand busy hands prepare him laurels.
 How his kind heart, when undeceiv'd and happy,
 Shall beat with love, soft shame, and tender pity!
 All smiles around you!

ALMIDA.

Every fluttering pulse
 Beats with emotion eager---long estrang'd
 To real peace, my hurried senses run
 In quick extremes from grief to ardent joy

In.

A TRAGEDY. 61

In sweet confusion! Now indeed I live,
My dearest father! ah! let us adore
That hand which gives us all we fear'd to lose.
I will forget my woes, do you forgive
My wild upbraidings, tears, and weak complaints.

ARNOLPH.

Yes, heaven vouchsafes to wipe away our tears.
Or I'm deceiv'd, or Aldamon approaches;
'Tis so---'tis he, the messenger of joy:
But whence those ling'ring steps? those downcast eyes?
Alas! I fear him wounded---

SCENE V.

ARNOLPH, ALMIDA, SOPHIA, ALDAMON.

ALMIDA.

What of Tancred?

ALDAMON.

Madam, he comes---

ALMIDA.

And safe?---be quick---relieve me.

ALDAMON.

If glory were sufficient---

ALMIDA.

Every nerve

With horror shivers! speak---ah no!--be dumb!

ALDAMON.

Tancred is yet alive---but ah! I fear,
Pierc'd by a mortal wound, he bleeds to death!

Trac'd

Trac'd in his blood alas! this dismal paper
Bears his last thoughts---I tremble to consign it!

ALMIDA *wildly.*

Give me my sentence---Tancred, I'll obey thee;
I'll follow thee---death must be in this paper!
Ah! wrote in blood---can I then stand the sight?
Serve me this once, sad eyes! 'tis your last effort.

[*reads.*

I could not bear your perfidy . . . I die [lets fall
[the paper and sinks in Sophia's arms.

Well my father!-----
Am I now lost, undone, and curst enough!

ARNOLPH.

At length the fates have pour'd out all their hatred,
And set us up a monument of woe!
'Tis well ye gods! we now are past complaint,
Lost even to fear, and senseless even to hope!
Yet ere I leave a cruel hated world,
Thy honour must be clear'd. This wretched country
Must learn the reverence due to injur'd virtue,
And venerate thy name.-----

ALMIDA.

What is to me,
Or fame, or country, when my Tancred dies?

ARNOLPH.

Dreadful indeed!-----

ALMIDA.

He dies---and undeceiv'd!
You are the cause---but yet ere he expires---
What do I see? these hated tyrants here!

SCENE.

A TRAGEDY. 63

SCENE VI.

ALMIDA, ARNOLPH, SOPHIA, ALDAMON, LOREDAN!

Knights, &c.

LOREDAN.

Most mournful news I bear! onward they bring
The gen'rous Tancred pierc'd with manly wounds!
He dies a hero! his fast streaming blood,
Shed for his country, we have stopt awhile.
Life flies apace---but his departing spirit
Hovering a moment on the brink of fate
Calls on Almida, and awaits her sight.

Tears fill each eye---and I with deep regret---

[while he speaks, Tancred is brought slowly in wounded, and supported. Almida breaks from the arms of Sophia, where she leant desponding, and turning wildly to Loredan she says.]

ALMIDA.

Hence thou barbarian with thy odious pity!

[then flies and kneels by Tancred.]

Tancred! too cruel, and too tender Tancred!

Canst thou yet hear me? can alas those eyes,

Obscur'd by death, behold thy lost Almida?

Oh speak! ah know me desolate of heart!

Admit thy spouse---admit her in thy tomb!

Give me that promis'd hand---look on me, Tancred!

Is then that glance thy last, and dost thou hate me?

[he looks tenderly at her.]

TANCRE D.

[raising himself, then falling back.]

Thou hast betray'd me!

ALMIDA.

ALMIDA.

I betray thee, Tancred!

ARNOLPH.

No, thou'rt deceiv'd—We all have been deceiv'd—
 Almida was condemn'd for loving thee!
 Our laws——our knights——
 All---all have err'd---and she alone was just!
 That fatal writing which inspir'd our vengeance
 Was meant to thee, and by a sad mistake——

TANCRED.

[raising himself with pain.]

Almida! heav'n! thou lov'st me?

ALMIDA.

Ah, had I ceas'd one moment to adore thee,
 I had indeed deserv'd the pangs that rend me!

TANCRED.

To know thee true and tender, is such bliss,
 It almost softens---yet emboldens death!
 But I deserve it---I who could suspect thee!
 I loath'd my life---I lose it, awful heaven!
 When one blest word has made it worth my care!

ALMIDA.

Is there no mercy, gods! and is it now,
 Now only I can speak my soul to Tancred!

TANCRED.

Thy tears should soothe my bitter pangs, Almida,
 But we must part---Death now indeed is dreadful!
 Its ice creeps thro' my veins---O Arnolph! Father!
 And thou lov'd victim to my sad suspicion,
 Join thy dear hand to mine---tho' cold and bloody!

[Arnolph joins their hands, weeping.]

ARNOLPH.

Look on us, heaven! yet grant——

TANCRED.

A TRAGEDY.

65

TANCRED.

Ah, 'tis too late!
I've liv'd to 'venge my country and my wife,
And now———Almida!

ALMIDA.

Speak!

TANCRED.

Follow not
A wretched lover---Swear that thou wilt live!
What darkness hides thee? Gracious gods— [dies.

CATANIO.

He dies!

And our pain'd hearts too late have known——

ALMIDA.

He dies! [*Almida sinks near the body, then rises and
[walks in wild disorder on the stage.*

Ha! do you weep, inhuman cruel tyrants?
Would earth this moment open to ingulph us!
Myself, and you, and this detested country,
Your barbarous senate, with its horrid arts
Of murd'ring virtue with the shew of justice!
Pour down your lightning, gods! that I may feast
My dying eyes with Syracuse in flames!
View all your bodies bleeding in the dust!

[*falls by Tancred, starts up again.*

Cold---Cold, and breathless! ha! these tyrants live!
They live, and Tancred dies---But hark he calls---
Calls his Almida---Yes, I hear his voice---
I come, I come---in night's eternal shade,
For ever join'd, where tyrants cannot reach us!
I go---may furies howling rise to haunt ye!

[*falls on Sophia.*

ARNOLPH.

Ye pow'rs! who shed soft pity on the wretched,
Calm her disorder'd soul! Almida! Daughter!

K

ALMIDA,

ALMIDA.

[Wildly, and pushing him from her.]

Away—Stand off—I never had a father!
Fathers are kind, and gentle to their children,
But you was stern, these barbarous men's accomplice!
Alas! forgive a wretched dying daughter—
My senses all are lost—my wand'ring head!
A moment yet, blest spirit! and I come!
Tancred, I'm thine! assist me—Oh!

[falls.]

ARNOLPH.

—She sinks,
And I am left to drain misfortune's cup.
Shed down thy mercy, heav'n—Save thy servant,
On the grave's brink, from madness and despair!
Restore my child—O let her opening eyes
Bless me once more, ere mine are clos'd for ever!
See, mortals see, what ruin is brought on
By our too violent tho' virtuous passions!

THE END.

EPILOGUE.

By Mr. GARRICK.

Spoken by Mrs. BARRY.

A Female bard, far from her native land,
A female should protect—lo! here I stand,
To claim of chivalry the ancient rites,
And throw my gauntlet at all critic knights;
Nor only for our auth'ress am I come,
I rise a champion for the sex at home!
Will shield you, ladies, from the sland'ring crew,
And prove Greeks, Romans, all must yield to you;
I've read how women, many of condition,
Did, ere some conqueror storm'd a town, petition,
That each might take a load upon her back—
Out march'd the dames, but carry'd no stuff sack;
They bore their loving husbands pick-a-pack!
The same domestic zeal has each fair she,
In full perfection at the coterie;
For don't they bargain, when they quit their houses
At pleasure's call, to carry too their spouses?
The care of children was no Spartan passion,
And may not we in time import this fashion?
Lycurgus, nimble finger'd youths rewarding,
Taught 'em the arts of dicing, and of carding;
And are these arts beyond our reach of thought?
Let parents learn; children will soon be taught.
Where, as with you, ye fair ones, shall we see,
That Roman virtue—hospitality!
The foreign artist can your smiles secure,
If he be singer, fidler, or friseur:
From our dull yawning scenes fatigu'd you go,
And croud to Fantocini's puppet-shew;
Each on the foreign things with rapture stares!
Sweet dears!—they're more like flesh and blood than play'rs.
As what we do, you modishly condemn,
So now, turn'd wood and wire, we'll act like them,

E P I L O G U E.

Move hands and feet, nay ev'n our tongues a-new,
Eb bien monsieur ! comment vous portez-vous ?
 Once more I challenge all the critic knights,
 From City jokers, to the wits at White's;
 From daily scriblers, volunteers, or backs;
 Up to those more than mortals at Almack's!
 Should any fribble criticks dare to dem,
 Gads---cus---I'll throw a chicken glove at them:
 And if to shew their teeth, they still will grin---
 Let 'em come on---I draw my corking pin!
 But should our soldiers, sailors, raise our fears,
 They only can be conquer'd by your tears.
 Your smiles may soften, but your tears can melt 'em;
 The bravest, boldest, mightiest men have felt 'em.
 Ay, you may sneer, ye wits, your hearts are steel;
 I speak of mortals, who can fight, and feel!
 In peace or war, ye fair, trust only those,
 Who love the sex, and always beat their foes:
 Will none accept my challenge?--what disgrace,
 To all the nibbling, scribbling, stand'ring race,
 Who dare not meet a woman face to face!
 The auth'ress and our sex have gain'd their cause!
 Complete their triumph, give 'em your applause.

